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TAGS: KPKO PGOV MASS MCAP MOPS MARR MZ

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE OFFERS CONDITIONAL PKO PARTICIPATION

Classified By: Charge d' Affairs Todd Chapman, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) During an August 8 call on President Guebuza's Chief of Staff Antonio Sumbana, the Charge noted he would soon visit Minister of Defense Tobias Dai to inquire about Mozambican participation in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Sumbana agreed with the Charge's political analysis that Mozambique's participation in PKO's in Africa offered the GRM an opportunity to demonstrate its interest in promoting peace in areas of conflict. Indeed, Mozambique benefited from a UN-led PKO which contained African troops following the 1992 signing of the peace accord which ended the country's long civil war.

¶2. (C) Sumbana, formerly Ambassador to Germany and an experienced diplomat, noted that Mozambique's participation in PKO's was important for the GRM to show its interest in regional issues. He also thought a PKO mission would revitalize the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM) and demonstrate that militaries in democratic African states "are for the purpose of making peace and not war." He concluded saying that participating in the PKO's would inculcate new values into a FADM in need of rejuvenation. Sumbana agreed it was useful to distinguish the GRM's political decision from military operational questions, which could be addressed once the political leadership determined its future course.

¶3. (C) The Minister of Defense cancelled the meeting with the Charge planned for later on August 8 because, according to MOD staff, the Minister was called to the Presidency to discuss security matters and, among other things, peacekeeping. MOD sources confirmed to the DATT that the GRM had received a letter from the United Nations requesting Mozambican participation in the expanded PKO mission in Sudan. The MOD's chief of defense policy MG Graca Chongo later told the DATT that he agreed it was time for the FADM to step up to its regional PKO responsibilities. The FADM currently has 12-14 military observers in Darfur, with plans to increase this number to 30-40, but has not had any troops participate in an AU/UN peacekeeping mission since a FADM company was in Burundi in 2005.

¶4. (C) The Charge and MOD Dai appeared together August 10 at a public handover of English-language training materials at which the Minister underscored for the attending press that such language skills were important for Mozambique's involvement in future PKO's. At an August 13 meeting at MOD Dai's office, the Charge inquired about increased GRM engagement in peacekeeping. The Minister noted their existing observer mission in Darfur, and added that the GRM was prepared to send a 'contingent' to Sudan. Even so, he said this contingent would need logistical support and

training from the international community in order to deploy.

Dai agreed with the Charge's suggestion that the DATT meet with a FADM representative to review exactly what logistical requirements would be necessary.

¶5. (C) Comment: Mozambique's political leadership appears to be mulling over a PKO commitment at the company level (180 soldiers) or less, though significant military operational concerns remain which would have to be overcome. The FADM is the beneficiary of substantial ACOTA training and other USG support in recent years; the British are also providing significant support to the FADM's PKO training base outside Maputo. While many within the FADM would welcome the opportunity to be given a substantive mission abroad, senior military leaders will counter that the lack of logistical support equipment, protective mobility and other vehicles prevent any possibility of PKO participation. The Charge earlier had reviewed the PKO issue with the British High Commissioner, who showed a willingness to a joint approach should the GRM make even a tentative step forward. While too early for excessive optimism, the issue of Mozambique's participation in PKO operations is in play, but will need a decisive push at the political level. End Comment.

Chapman